

REMARKS

Claims 16-20 are pending in the application. Claim 16, the only independent claim, has been amended herein.

Applicant is filing this Preliminary Amendment with an Request for Continued Examination (RCE), in response to the final Office Action dated August 9, 2004. In view of the amendments above and the remarks below, Applicant respectfully requests consideration and allowance of the present application.

In the last Office Action, Claims 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,272,787 (Michael) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,162,914 (Takahashi).

Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, Applicant has amended Claim 16 to even more clearly recite the invention it claims. Specifically, independent Claim 16 is directed to an image pickup apparatus including an image sensor, a synthesizing circuit, a switching circuit, a detecting circuit, and a control circuit. The image sensor picks up an image corresponding to an optical image, and produces a first field image signal having a first exposure, and a second field image signal having a second exposure different from the first exposure. The synthesizing circuit synthesizes the first field image signal and the second field image signal to form a third image signal having a wider exposure range than the first or second field image signal. The switching circuit selectively outputs one of the first field image signal having the first exposure and the third image signal having the wider exposure range than the first field image signal. The detecting circuit detects an amount of motion information between the first and second field image signals to produce a detection signal in comparison with a predetermined threshold level. The control circuit controls the switching circuit to select one of the first field image signal having the first exposure and the third image signal having the wider

exposure range than the first field image signal in response to a result of the detecting circuit.

The features of the claimed invention are described in the specification with reference to Figures 1, 3, and 4. With the features of the claimed invention, as discussed, for example at page 6, line 20 - page 7, line 3 of the specification, the invention prevents formation of double or triple images of an object caused by motion of the object itself or hand vibration.

Applicant submits that the cited patents, taken singly or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the combination of features recited in Claim 16. Specifically, Michael relates to a TV picture freeze system that can capture a video frame made of first and second fields. The picture freeze system in Michael is concerned with selectively determining, picture point by picture point, whether movement has occurred, and if movement has occurred, then to selectively control the read out so that information from both fields is used when no movement has been detected, and only a single field is used for any parts of the picture where movement has occurred. See Michael, column 1, line 63-column 2, line 2. Takahashi relates to an image sensing device adapted to compose a single picture from a plurality of pictures.

Applicant submits that the cited patents, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the combination of features recited in Claim 16 in which a synthesizing circuit synthesizes first and second field image signals, which have first and second exposures different from each other, to form a third image signal having a wider exposure range than the first or second field image signals, a switching circuit that selectively outputs the first field image signal or the third image signal, a detecting circuit that detects an amount of motion information between the first and second field image signals to produce a detection signal in comparison with the predetermined threshold, and a control circuit that controls

the switching circuit to select either the first field image signal or the third image signal in response to a result of the detecting circuit.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent Claim 16 is patentably distinguishable from the cited art.

Applicant further submits that the dependent claims are allowable for the reasons discussed above for Claim 16. In addition, Applicant submits that these claims recite additional features further distinguishing them from the cited patents. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests individual consideration of each dependent claim.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration, and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C., office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address below.

Respectfully submitted,

*Anne M. Maher*  
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Attorney for Applicant  
Anne M. Maher  
Registration No. 38,231

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10112-3801  
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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